

CHRISTIANITY and CRISIS

A Christian Journal of Opinion

The Situation in the Middle East

It would be premature to pass judgment on the actions of our Government in sending the Marines to Lebanon and on those of the British Government in heeding a similar request from King Hussein in Jordan. An immediate reaction is to observe that Britain and the United States are again united in the Middle East and that, if we are right now, we must have been wrong in opposing Britain in the Suez crisis.

Let us, in suspending judgment momentarily, merely record the facts that argue pro and con, not only in our minds but in many American minds.

In favor of the action is the fact that our friends in the Middle East are being picked off one by one. If we had not done something, Nasser would have controlled the entire Middle East. That sentient reporter, Joseph Alsop, predicted for weeks that if we remained hesitant in following British promptings to take political action, we would finally have to take the dangerous military action that has now stirred the whole world. Many observers believe that the rebellion in Iraq was the direct consequence of our tardiness in Lebanon. The prime ministers of the Baghdad Pact nations of Iran, Turkey and Pakistan have welcomed our action and have also hinted that it was late. The action had the same quality of desperation that characterized the British action in the Suez crisis. Something had to be done.

Against our action the following facts can be listed. Among the reasons we have given for the landing of the Marines in Lebanon was the specious one that we were protecting the lives and property of American citizens. The Russians were quick to point out that this reason has no standing in international law. United Nations General

Secretary Dag Hammarskjold disputed our evidence that the Lebanese rebellion was supported by the United Arab Republic. Conflicting evidence from United States and United Nations observers prompts the conclusion that the rebellion had both internal and external causes. Nasser was certainly going to profit from the success of the rebellion.

The coolness of many western European nations, particularly Sweden, toward our adventure and the opposition of many pro-Western deputies in Lebanon itself are evidence that, however necessary the action was as a desperate measure, it was probably unwise to engage in an adventure that did not have the clear support of all our allies. The subsequent announcement of the British and American governments that we would not interfere with Iraq unless oil supplies were stopped reveals the real motive of our own policy in the Middle East. Europe's dependence on the oil of the Middle East is not nefarious, but it does point to a fact that we are hesitant to avow and which gives Nasser such a strangle hold on Europe.

In addition to these arguments pro and con, we must record the fact that recent developments have proved the critics of Eden's Suez action wrong, particularly those who, like Hugh Gaitskill, declared that Eisenhower had a clear "moral authority" over President Nasser.

Developments have also proved the irrelevance of the Eisenhower Doctrine to any conceivable eventualities in the Middle East. The simple reason for this irrelevance is that it promises to come to the aid of nations menaced by "international communism." But the nations of the Middle East are not menaced by anything as explicit as this definition. As Senator Fulbright rightly maintained, we have been obsessed with international

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communism and have not come to terms with the national revolutions of the Middle East from which Russia secures much profit on her original investment made in the arms deal with Nasser. Meanwhile Nasser is somewhat uneasy as a cat's paw of Russia as was evidenced by the fact that he was visiting Tito when the trouble started. But this does not worry Russia too much.

It is not clear, and it may never be, what dire consequences we may have prevented by our action. It is clear, however, that the price we have paid in moral prestige, whatever boon we secured, has been tremendous.

R. N.

LEBANON: NEW ELEMENTS OF CRISIS*

A SEASONED Middle East diplomatist notes that six months ago Lebanon was the least probable scene of international crisis. The conflict that has raged since mid-May attests to the endless contingencies of history, for the clash least anticipated has now engulfed Lebanon, Iraq and Jordan. The nature of the threat, no less than the particular crisis, escaped prediction by responsible American officials. In retrospect, the Eisenhower Doctrine appears to have prepared for the wrong threat in the wrong place at the wrong time. Serious and informed people have a responsibility to ask what misled us and caused American policy to go wrong.

One error doubtless was the Administration's estimate that communism was the primary and most direct threat to the area. In the long run this estimate may be vindicated if communism succeeds in harnessing indigenous forces, but in the short run Nasserism and internal political weakness seem the more prominent threats. The trouble with any single explanation is its dependence on partial truth.

Lebanon has been a nation living in two worlds. It is Arab and half its population is Moslem, but the other half is Christian. It has sympathy for some aspects of pan-Arabism, but its mountains isolate it from the rest of the Arab world; its sea-ports (Beirut, Tyre, Sidon and Tripoli) face west to the Mediterranean and its famed American University at Beirut all have given it other loyalties as well.

The Opposition to the government of President Camille Chamoun had sought unsuccessfully to

exploit his pro-Western outlook and defeat him at the polls. It charged he had supported the Eisenhower Doctrine and refused to break off diplomatic relations with England and France following the Suez crisis. Failing here the leaders of the Opposition rallied the support of Egypt and Syria with volunteers, arms and propaganda. Having failed at the polls, it made its appeal to the mobs: the pretext for the insurrection was said to be the plan of the President to change the Constitution to allow him a second term.

The murder of the editor of an opposition newspaper in Beirut touched off the spark. The delicately balanced political equilibrium was upset as the Arab Liberation Movement, with close ties in Cairo and Damascus, strove to undo the compromise by which the Lebanese had lived in two worlds without being fully a member of either. Up to now religious and sectarian factors had been nicely balanced. The President was a Maronite Christian, the Prime Minister a Suli Moslem and the Foreign Minister a Greek Orthodox Christian. American University, likewise, had been a meeting place of Arab and Christian, East and West. Whether Lebanese nationalism or pan-Arabism triumphed, the restoration of this balance seemed unlikely. The "National Covenant" or gentlemen's agreement initiated in 1943 by a Maronite Christian, President Neshara el-Khoury, and a Moslem, Riad Solh, seemed dead.

In the baffling crisis in Lebanon there are at least five lessons for American policy makers. First, as the challenge to President Chamoun makes plain, policies of support for established governments along the lines of such European programs as the Marshall Plan will not alone suffice. In Europe, the established political and economic systems are readily identified. In transitional areas, their identity is less clear.

Second, American foreign policy in the fall of 1956 during the Suez crisis proceeded as if there were few if any vital Western interests that could justify military action in the Middle East. With the continued deterioration of conditions in Lebanon, responsible Americans have come to see that the *status quo* is vital to the West. Lebanon is a transit point between Iraq and Jordan with a large proportion of Iraq's oil passing through its territory. Also the fate of the Christian community there has political and economic significance and can scarcely be a matter of indifference. The fate of Lebanon seems bound up with the fate of the whole

* This editorial was written prior to United States intervention in Lebanon.

of the Middle East. Not surprisingly, this has for some weeks occasioned talk of military intervention.

Third, the crisis reflects the blending, almost inextricably, of internal and international conflicts. Since the days of the Spanish Civil War, the debate has gone on with each succeeding clash: was the crisis primarily domestic or international in character? There can be little doubt that the United Arab Republic has exerted significant influence from the outside. It has harangued the masses through *Sawt-al-'Arab* (Radio Egypt) and the Egyptian press. It has subsidized opposition leaders, smuggled arms, made possible the infiltration of Deuxième Bureau (intelligence) personnel from Syria and called for open revolt against the "lackeys of imperialism."

On the other hand, grievances going back to 1920, especially in Tripoli, have furnished fuel for the strife. Moslem groups throughout Lebanon claim discrimination and denial of rights. They claim that all Moslems, except "pliant tools," remain under severe taboos in political and economic rights, and are kept in poverty and ignorance. Because of economic barriers between Syria and Lebanon, Tripoli's trade has stagnated, its industries have come to a standstill and its agri-

culture has deteriorated. Even President Chamoun's efforts to alleviate their suffering have not been successful, and the effects of a devastating flood of three years ago have left wounds on Tripoli's civic life. Into this climate Colonel Nasser has moved, promising rectification for grievances and increased Moslem rights. Is it any wonder that third parties from the West have hesitated to intervene?

Fourth, compromise in this setting of inflamed passion and uncompromising zeal becomes more and more difficult. Neither side can back down without almost total loss of face. President Chamoun certainly will not seek a third term, but he is reluctant to say so before domestic order is restored.

Fifth, neither a policy of massive intervention nor one of non-intervention or withdrawal are feasible American policies in the long run except as measures of last resort. Pressure must be exerted as the West failed to do in 1956, but the influence must not be massive or too direct. Such intervention as there is must be temporary in order to encourage some kind of settlement. Seldom in history have American policymakers had to walk courageously a more strait and narrow path.

K. W. T.

Western Policy and Colonialism*

FOR SOME YEARS now the crucial issues in international affairs have been connected with "colonialism"—the problem of peoples who have come to resent what they feel to be a form of subjection. We are faced with the challenge presented by the demand for genuine freedom and autonomy amongst the Arabian peoples, and we are going to have to meet the problem of race relations in Africa. In everyday's newspaper the names of Algeria, Cyprus, Aden and Lebanon make our hearts sink into our boots.

Bringing to the issues of 1958 the mentality of 1948 we think first of a Russian attack across Europe and we see the colonialist issue only within that framework, as an incidental affair. Russia is wiser than this, and if we do not open our eyes her leaders will never even need to think about an invasion of the West. All they have to do is to fold their arms, behave impeccably and watch us carrying on with the mistakes that we are already making.

For when countries play the game that we are playing, the very situation tends to trip them into

making serious mistakes. They may even become the wrongdoers without realizing that they are falling into sin; for they easily imagine that they are justified in threatening war when the *status quo* is being changed to their detriment. The United Nations seems to have prevented our carrying out our threat in Lebanon, and now it turns out that we might have sought for a policy of compromise there all the time. It is all too much like the story of Suez where, on his own avowal, Sir Anthony Eden saw Nasser only in terms of the Hitler of 20 years before. Democracy breaks down in France, and who would deny that it was brought to its doom by its attitude to Algeria? Who would say that even under a different constitution (like that of England or the United States, for example) the French policy in Algeria would have led to anything but disaster?

At heart we know we have been put on the defensive—we know we have been put into retreat—by the problem of resentful people who are still under some form of subjection. And we have not

* This article was written in the days just prior to the recent upheaval in the Middle East. George W. Webber's article on current trends of evangelism, originally scheduled for this issue, will appear later in a fall issue.

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only been losing them where we ought to have led them, but we have been losing the sympathy of the uncommitted nations.

The Wrong Side of the Primary Issue

We are tricking ourselves if we are content to say that Soviet Russia is to blame for our troubles. Even if it were true that the Russians were creating difficulties for us by provoking or encouraging these struggles for freedom, this is a game that western European liberals used to regard as legitimate. The success of Russia and her emergence as a colossal power in 1945 would have affected the rest of the world by magnetic attraction even if she had never conducted any propaganda abroad. And now nothing can stop the demand for freedom, autonomy and adult status—not even an order from Moscow could halt the agitation, not even the defeat of Russia in another world war.

Why, after being on the side of liberty in past centuries, have England, France and the United States allowed themselves to be tripped into being on the wrong side of what is bound to be the primary issue in international affairs? That they have been put into this predicament is the most glorious (and the most legitimate) of all the diplomatic victories that have brought Russia to its unprecedented predominance in Europe within a period of 30 years.

Because we envisage the colonialist issue within the wrong framework—and see it as only peripheral when it is really the central issue—we are terrified by the call that the peoples are making for liberty and autonomy. We think that here is another position that we are losing, a position that would be strategic in the event of war with Russia. Yet we ourselves have been incredibly severe on governments that have kept peoples in a form of subjection for reasons that are really strategic. And what should we have said if the events in Cyprus or the tortures in Algeria had taken place on the other side of the Iron Curtain?

In any case, why on earth do we so easily assume that the discontented peoples would work to the advantage of Russia if we ourselves opened the way to genuine freedom for them? Nothing but the kind of conduct that we have been pursuing could have driven a Nasser or the Muslim peoples into dangerous contact with Russia. Indeed, it is remarkable to what a degree the enemies of the various forms of "imperialism" have been anxious to avoid the Russian embrace.

Against Russia we have one strong card and one only: the doctrine of liberty and the self-de-

termination of peoples. We are deceiving ourselves if we refuse to admit that, in return for a loss of freedom, communism has had much to contribute to the submerged populations of various countries. Amongst those who most believe that revolution would be a great disaster for Western states—a terrible destruction of cultural values that take centuries to produce—there are some who must realize that this argument against revolution does not apply to great underdeveloped areas of the globe where vast masses of humanity are only just beginning to be awakened. These masses are liable to find their material needs so desperate as to make mere "liberty" (a thing that they have never really known) seem doctrinaire and unreal. To some of us there came a moment of unusual terror—irrational and indefensible—when the Communist revolution prevailed in China. For the first time in our lifetime, after futile decades of disorder, there was at least a chance that China would get on its feet and make a development that was bound to be formidable to the rest of the world.

If only material considerations are envisaged the great engine of communism can produce surprising results, and possibly something like agrarian revolution is the only remedy against mass-starvation in various parts of the world. Sometimes one has to wonder what it is that can prevent the more backward peoples of Asia or the Negroes of Africa from becoming Communists when the light is allowed to dawn on them. In certain circumstances purely material considerations make a louder call on the hearts of men than the voice of liberty. Against all the arguments that the Communist can employ—including the type of argument that can always be addressed to any man who has a complaint against the *status quo*—what have we to say except that no material consideration can override the long-term benefits of liberty and self-government? And now the world might well be asking whether we really believe in this argument ourselves.

Our Problem: the Status Quo

Because we have allowed ourselves to be caught on the wrong foot, we are losing the moral assets that in the long run might have been more effective than anything else. We have allowed ourselves to be put with our backs to the wall, like Metternich, defending with legalistic arguments a *status quo* that no longer corresponds to recognized moral principles. And the result is that the people of the West seem sometimes to be beginning to lose faith in themselves. It has always been

true that the men who were defending Western ideals were bound to be in alliance with men who were only defending vested interests, but now the ideals and the vested interests are more clearly diverging from one another. And we see our mistakes when it is too late.

Have we still time to recover the confidence of the Arabian peoples as distinct from some of the doubtful regimes to which we are allied? A compromise that might have satisfied Cyprus a few years ago may prove impossible after so long a period of hatred and bloodshed. Even in Lebanon we may have gone too far before discovering that there was something to be said for compromise.

And is the problem of Algeria going to be solved merely because General de Gaulle has come to power? The question is important because if General de Gaulle does not solve the problem, there may be no easy alternative to communism in France. The judgment of God is upon us if one of the forms of colonialism becomes the reason for a new Communist revolution in the West.

We are still thinking of a straight war between the East and the West, and this is no doubt exactly what the Russians want us to be thinking about. They cannot be blind to the easier courses that are open to them, and it is doubtful whether they would even trouble to fight us if we resorted to warlike action ourselves. If we intervened in Lebanon, they need not exert themselves to expose us, and they are much more likely to attack Yugoslavia or undertake some other adventure of their own. In such circumstances the world will be otherwise too preoccupied, and we ourselves too distracted, to meet a new crisis in an unexpected quarter.

We have been losing ground on the main field of battle. Compared with this a Russian superiority in nuclear weapons is an idle irrelevancy. We must be prepared, therefore, for a radical revision of our thinking. Since colonialism and imperialism are bound to be in retreat, let us see that their retreat is our virtue and our victory, and not a story of gloomy withdrawal. It is we who must be out to change the *status quo* in the world and to be ahead of Soviet Russia, offering the underdeveloped peoples not less than communism can offer, but the advantages of genuine liberty and self-determination too.

The peoples who are really submerged, including some of the Arabian populations, need authentic leadership of course if they are not to remain submerged. They may secure it from communism if there is no Nasser to help them. But why, be-

fore a Nasser ever emerged, were they not receiving leadership and more genuine awakening from us? Without positive ideals to work for we are doomed. The morale of a nation easily rots when men are merely fighting to postpone change, to hold on to the *status quo* as long as possible. And what is the positive ideal in the French conflict with the Algerians?

It is a question, therefore, whether we ourselves have not become too materialistic, too preoccupied with war and the brute questions of power. We are overlooking the fact that the stage is now set for a straight conflict of ideals, and the opinion of peoples like the natives of Algeria is going to be the arbiter in this conflict. Indeed, we dread the awakening of some of these peoples since we know how much their local action can do to decide our fate.

The Role of Christians

And it is we who are in danger of proving inadequate at the moment for just this war of ideals and for the leadership of undeveloped peoples. Because we have lost so much ground and created so much resentment, the cure will have to be more radical than it otherwise would have been; that is why the situation calls for some radical rethinking.

Without losing hold of our spiritual ideals, our doctrine of liberty and our high valuation of personality, we need to offer great sections of the world an alternative that is at least not less revolutionary than Marxism. At the moment it is in respect of our ideals rather than our armaments that we are found wanting. There is something wrong either with democracy or with democratic leadership if, instead of marching ahead for the sake of an ideal with the wind behind us, we are defending the remnants of our vested interests with our eyes clouded by gloom and our backs to the wall.

Christians, therefore, have a part to play in the international events of our time, for religion commands in us a universal outlook, and charity requires of us a vivid appreciation of the needs and predicaments of other men. It is incumbent upon us to have compassion for all human beings and to see them apart from the organizations and systems in which they are imprisoned. It is incumbent on us to see and feel with the rebellious Cypriots and the discontented Algerians as well as with the oppressed inhabitants of Czechoslovakia.

In fact the Christian ought to excel everybody else in imagination and, particularly, in the art of seeing himself in the other man's place. How-

ever, even religion can be degraded into the service of vested interests and strategic considerations. We must not pretend that we stand for a monolithic Right fighting a monolithic Wrong. Even the men of the world would do better to put some of their trust in spiritual forces. And the imponderable forces that our governments sometimes ignore and

sometimes actually oppose are perhaps the only firm allies on which we could afford to count. Indeed the Arabs would be better allies if only they were genuinely strong, genuinely awakened and genuinely autonomous. We ought to be the ones fighting for a new kind of world. And for us that new world cannot come too soon.

A Protestant View of Roman Catholic Power — I*

JOHN C. BENNETT

THE ATTITUDES OF Americans toward Church-State relations depends in considerable measure on their attitude toward Roman Catholicism. The chief concern that lies back of the convictions of non-Catholics is the concern for religious liberty and the chief threat to religious liberty is seen in the tremendous growth of Roman Catholicism as a cultural and political power in the United States.

Dogmatic and Civil Intolerance

There are two deep problems connected with Roman Catholicism that must be emphasized at the outset of any discussion. One is the *dogmatic intolerance* which is itself a part of the Roman Catholic faith. This dogmatic intolerance need not lead to *civil intolerance* but there is a tendency for it to do so just as was the case when it characterized the major Protestant bodies. This dogmatic intolerance becomes all the more difficult for non-Catholics when it is associated not only with distinctly religious dogma, but also with elements of natural law that are not accepted as divinely sanctioned moral demands by most non-Catholics. This is true of birth control, of some matters of medical ethics. It is true even of gambling under limited conditions, though this has to do not with a moral demand but with a moral permission! One symptom of the dogmatic intolerance that is most objectionable to non-Catholics is the strict Catholic regulation concerning the religions of the children of mixed marriages.

An important qualification of this dogmatic intolerance that has received much emphasis in recent years is the sophisticated interpretation of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* which enables the Roman Catholic to take a charitable attitude toward the destiny of non-Catholics as individuals. This was dramatized by the excommunication of

Father Feeney in Boston for denying that non-Catholics can be saved.

The other basic problem is the real tension between an authoritarian, centralized hierarchical church and the spirit of an open, pluralistic, democratic society. There is abundant evidence that Roman Catholics in this country do sincerely believe in democracy and practice this belief, but I do not see how they themselves can deny that their polity poses a problem for democracy which is not posed by churches which make their decisions in regard to public policy by processes of open discussion in which both clergy and laymen share. The polity of the Episcopal Church does give bishops meeting separately a veto over many things, but it also gives the laity voting separately in the dioceses a veto over the choice of bishops. I mention this as an example of one of the more hierarchical forms of polity outside the Roman Catholic Church.

The Roman polity is itself a matter of faith and therefore religious liberty includes the liberty to preserve that type of polity. And if it is said that the Papacy creates a problem of peculiar difficulty because it is from the point of view of the nation a "foreign power," the answer that Protestants should be able to accept is that the Church as Church is supranational and the religious liberty of all Christians includes their right to have relationships, suitable to their polity, with the universal Church.

Protestant Fears

American Protestants are troubled over far more than these abstract problems created by the Roman Catholic faith and ecclesiastical structure. They resent much that is done by the Roman Catholic Church in America and they fear great-

* From the forthcoming book, *Christians and the State*, soon to be published by Charles Scribner's Sons. The concluding installment will appear in the next issue.
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ly what may yet be done. The books by Paul Blanshard, especially his *American Freedom and Catholic Power* (Beacon Press, 1949), marshal many facts which both Catholics and Protestants should take seriously. It is unfortunate that Mr. Blanshard has presented his material in such a way as to confuse criticism of many particular applications of Catholic teaching with what seems to be an attack on the freedom of a church to have its own authoritarian structure as a matter of faith. Also, he writes not from a Protestant but from a secularist point of view, and thus sees no inherent problem in the relation of religion to public education. He is quite satisfied with the complete separation of school and religion. There is a tendency to exaggerate the monolithic character of world-wide Catholicism under papal direction, and Mr. Blanshard's projection upon the future of the indefinite threat of Catholic power to American democracy does not, it seems to me, do justice to the four considerations which I will emphasize in my second article. The book is the work of a very energetic and well-informed prosecutor and should be used as such.

This is such familiar ground that I need only outline some of the resentments and the fears. *The general thesis of this article and the one that follows is that, while many of these resentments and fears are justified, it is a mistake to project them in indefinitely extended form upon the future and to allow all of our thinking about Roman Catholicism and most of our thinking about Church-State relations to be controlled by them in that extended form.* After outlining the grounds for some justified resentments and fears in this article, I will deal in the second article with other facts about Roman Catholic life that should play a larger part than they do in Protestant attitudes toward Roman Catholicism.

The Roman Catholic Church is not a majority church in the country at large and, since immigration has been greatly limited, its rate of growth has not been quite as rapid as the rate of growth of the Protestant churches. But its strength is distributed so as to give it great majorities in some cities, and enormous political power and cultural influence in many states. It is extremely difficult for Protestants and other non-Catholics to live with Roman Catholicism as the religion of a large local majority. It has been difficult in the past for Roman Catholics to live with Protestantism as the religion of a large local majority.

The centralized organization and the absolute claims of the Roman Church enhance the difficulty

but Protestants must not forget that any small minority feels pressure that arouses resentments and fears under these circumstances. Part of the problem is a universal human tendency that does not depend on a particular ecclesiastical situation. However, it is the threat of a local majority that leads non-Catholics to emphasize the protections of religious liberty in the Federal Constitution. Catholics also have had occasion to appeal to these same protections but today their chief desire is to establish a somewhat flexible interpretation of the First Amendment.

Uses of Power

Non-Catholics have grounds for resenting the tendency of Roman Catholics to use their power to impose Roman Catholic ideas of natural law. They see it in the birth control legislation in Massachusetts and Connecticut; they see it in the Catholic pressure to remove welfare agencies that have birth control clinics from local community chests elsewhere; they see it in the Roman Catholic objection to divorce laws that are much more flexible than the law of the Church; they see it in the attempts to have non-Catholic hospitals adopt the Roman Catholic ideas of medical ethics in the field of obstetrics.

Non-Catholics have grounds for resenting and fearing the tendency of Roman Catholics, when they have the power, to seek control of the public school system to bend it in part to Catholic purposes. Parochial schools could operate as safety valves for the public schools but this is often not the case. When Roman Catholics dominate the public school boards they sometimes discriminate against non-Catholic teachers. In extreme cases that have been much publicized they have operated public schools as though they were parochial schools. Perhaps more serious in the long run is the tendency of Roman Catholics in some places to oppose needed bond issues or appropriations for the public schools. This is not a surprising reaction to the double burden of education costs that they themselves bear, but it is very bad for education.

Non-Catholics have grounds for resenting and fearing Catholic boycotts of communications media, including the publishers of books, and boycotts of local merchants who have some connection with a policy that they oppose. Fear of Catholic boycott often operates as a reason for self-censorship. Newspapers are influenced by this fear and it is very difficult to get news published that may be unfavorable to the Roman Catholic Church.

No one can criticize the Roman Catholic Church or any other church for seeking to discipline the theater-going or the reading of its own constituency. Boycotting that consists only of this self-discipline within the Church may be unfortunate in some of its effects, but it is not open to objection in principle. It is the punitive boycott directed against all that a particular agency may do that interferes with the freedom of non-Catholics.

Non-Catholics have grounds for criticizing in no uncertain terms the behavior of the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church in other countries, especially in Spain and in some of the Latin American countries. American Protestants are rightly concerned when their fellow Protestants are the objects of discrimination or persecution. Whenever American Catholics bring pressure on their government in favor of the Roman Catholic Church as against Protestantism in Latin American countries, American Protestants have a right to be disturbed and to bring counter-pressures as they have done.

Representation at the Vatican

The desire of many Catholics to have the United States send a diplomatic representative to the Vatican has become a symbol to most Protestants of the many things that they resent in the use of Catholic power. This issue is confused because it is obvious that in the world at large the representation of a nation at the Vatican is not interpreted as a sign that the nation involved shows favoritism to the Roman Catholic Church. Otherwise there would not be representatives from many non-Christian countries, from Britain which has a state church that is not the Roman Catholic Church, nor from

France which is secularist and anti-clerical in its politics.

But it is only fair to recognize the fact that the very size of the Roman Catholic Church in this country and the absence of any state church, the existence of which would prove that the Roman Catholic Church is not the favored church, makes American Protestants feel that diplomatic representation at the Vatican is a great concession to one American church in contrast to others. American Protestants emphasize the fact that the Pope is the head of one American church rather than the fact that the Vatican is the center of a diplomatic service which, as a unique institution of the old world, cannot be grasped by the American logic governing Church-State relations.

Though I do not believe that this issue is as important as most Protestant leaders have made it, I have come to see that the meaning of representation at the Vatican to American non-Catholics in view of the actual religious situation in this country is natural, and the fact that this meaning exists here is more important than the fact that it does not exist in Britain or in Japan, for there are objective reasons for the difference. Because of them I believe that diplomatic representation of the American government at the Vatican will inevitably be interpreted as unfair to non-Catholics in this country.

(To be concluded in the next issue.)

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